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TO WHAT EXTENT SHOULD ARTISTIC AND UTILITARIAN SUBJECTS IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE COUNT TOWARD THE DEGREE OF A.B.?

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The whole question to what extent artistic and utilitarian subjects in school and college should count toward the degree of bachelor of arts appears too extensive for this meeting. It would be folly for us to waive aside the problem of life in general; to doff our caps and let it pass. Such an undertaking demands nothing short of a high-school graduation part. Let us limit the question.

If we define utilitarian subjects as those which aid in the practical concerns of life, then we must include the whole curriculum; if we mean by utilitarian subjects those whose sole object is to enable one to earn a living, then, however valuable such studies may be, we must omit all from the A. B. course. Moreover, whether a subject is utilitarian or not depends frequently not so much on the subject-matter as on the attitude of the teacher and of the pupil, and the immediate aims of both. These difficulties are such that I am glad the following speaker is to deal with the utilitarian studies, leaving for me the question of the place of artistic studies in the college course.

Under the term "artistic studies" we may include literature, but since there is general agreement as to the place of literature in the bachelor of arts course, we may as well for our purposes understand by the term "artistic studies" music, the theory and history of painting, sculpture, architecture, and design. The subject of music, however, I shall not consider separately, since most that I shall say applies to all the fine arts.

Need we ask at the outset: What is art? Need we split hairs in defining beauty? I think not. For our purposes exact definitions of art and of beauty are neither possible nor necessary. We may follow Kant or Fichte or Hegel or Tolstoi; we may employ objective or subjective definitions; we may reach them through education or philosophy. All this matters little, since everyone with sufficient interest to listen to a rather dry discussion on this subject has a sufficiently clear idea of the meaning of beauty and of art.

To what extent such subjects should count toward the bachelor of arts degree is determined in part by the aim of that education which we have long called liberal. That aim, you will concede, is the development of what is best in the individual, the whole individual, both for himself and for social well-being. Or, as Miss Kate Gordon told us last evening, the aim is the development of judgment, character, and taste. I am glad that she has emphasized taste. For education, in order to prepare for "complete living," must enable each person to be of service to society and to attain the highest possible happiness in living. To be truly happy, he must have such thorough and wise training of the *senses*, as well as of the faculties, that he shall have joy in labor, and the ability to enter with enthusiasm and spiritual profit into the refined pleasures of life.

Since, then, the whole man is to be developed, with all the faculties of mind and soul, we need not prolong the venerable discussion as to the relative merits of the sciences and humanities for furthering the aims of education. In the design above this platform, science and art appear, supplementing and strengthening each other. Both are needed for symmetrical development. Neither should be allowed to encroach upon the other. Therefore the question of artistic studies in the college course is much affected by the scientific trend of modern education.

For just at the period in our national development when peace and material prosperity give opportunity for fostering the love of beauty among us, when the study and practice of the fine arts in schools and colleges should have high place, the utilitarian spirit of the age becomes more deadening to the æsthetic faculties, and the senses yield to this matter-of-fact, unimaginative, analytic temper of the scientist.

Literature alone seems to have held its own. True to its place among the fine arts, it has ever satisfied something nobler than the love of money, something higher than eagerness for facts; through its appeal to the imaginative, the poetical faculties, it has done much to satisfy the craving for beauty. Yet, significant of this modern matter-of-fact spirit is the truth that even literature in some institutions has so far succumbed to cold, philological analysis and scientific method that students may endure a course in Shakespeare with scarce a suspicion that they are studying poetry.

Even colleges which have cultivated a love of beauty in literature have, for the most part, neglected the beautiful in other arts, so that students with high degrees are often ignorant of the finest of arts, and have false ideas of the aim, scope, and method of art-study. They understand and enjoy the *Iliad*, but not the Parthenon; the history of the dark ages

they know in painful detail, but its architecture they do not seek to understand; the significance of the Renaissance they know in philosophy, but not in painting. To them are lost, therefore, some of the most significant manifestations of the genius of each age and race.

So far to follow this scientific spirit as to provide no adequate training of the artistic sensibilities is to overemphasize the materialistic agencies which curb the highest expression of the human being in service and joy. Under such conditions the degree of bachelor of arts must represent only a partial development of the student. In a majority of American colleges this is the case. The discoveries in science, their applications to industrial arts, the accumulation of wealth—all this, great as it might be if employed as a means toward higher ends, has so far become an end in itself, madly striven for and absurdly magnified in importance, that your young bachelor of arts, as he leaves the one place which should have developed his whole nature, is fortunate if he does not find himself abnormally developed, stunted in those faculties which most serve to produce noble and happy lives.

The effect of this utilitarian tendency on academic studies is marked. Those colleges with the courage to regard the classics as essential behold an ever-increasing number of students who, discovering no cash value in Latin and Greek, pass on to institutions where they may devote themselves exclusively to cash-value subjects. The same tendency accounts for another condition which a careful examination of college catalogues reveals: not half the institutions in the United States granting the degree of bachelor of arts offer courses in the history and theory and practice of art.

This is a grave defect in American education; for a person with æsthetic appreciations developed, with the power to appreciate and enjoy much that is best in nature and in art, can make higher and more varied uses of wealth and knowledge, to his own growing happiness and to the betterment of society, than a person who has been clamped down to the dead level of the utilitarian commonplace by an education which neglects the supreme faculties of human nature, imagination and aspiration. Such an education is not liberal. Whatever it may achieve in the way of immediate, material utilities, it does not ultimately develop the spiritual nature. It therefore deadens the artistic sensibilities, and thus cuts off the possibilities of highest happiness and broadest usefulness.

It follows that the arts of man, being the creations of his spiritual power, should be employed constantly from the beginning to the end of education. They give fullest expression to man's highest life. They are not merely incidental phenomena in the life of man; they are the

essential expressions of his spiritual growth. All of which is far from the popular notion concerning art studies, far from the shallow idea which regards such studies as mere amusements for idle young ladies. In every age of which we have record, the creative instinct of man and the natural love of beauty have found expression in art. Thus, in the highest civilization, man has shared his spiritual experience with his fellow-men.

But, we have said, the aim of education is the development of the whole individual, not only for himself, but also for social well-being. Now, social well-being requires social morality, conformity to the laws of right living. Art is therefore related to life in stimulating ethical conduct, and in giving meaning and incentive to that truly religious life which, after all, most conduces to social happiness. Art is further concerned in fitting men for the highest social life through its intimate application to industry. Art education is preparing men and women to be useful members of society, when it inspires them with the desire to surround the most ugly lives with things of beauty; when it discovers the craving of every unspoiled creature for the beautiful in some form. Art education, therefore, aids industrial and social betterment through recognizing that today the great multitudes of toilers demand more than mere subsistence.

They crave beauty, and the satisfaction of this natural desire is necessary for the normal development of the man and the citizen. But the millions of toilers and producers cannot furnish beauty. Art can do so, provided the small body of the wealthy and the educated, through the cultivation of their own æsthetic appreciations, are brought to acknowledge their debt to the toilers. This debt they can pay, not by teaching art to the millions, by no means through endeavoring to make them artists, but by giving them free the best products of art in public buildings and amusements, statues, fountains, mural decorations, where the greatest number can enjoy them, where the toilers will feed on them unconsciously, and feel their better humanity awakened, their hunger for beauty satisfied, and their life refreshed and comforted.

The right art education is therefore both Greek and Christian in character; it seeks at once the ideals of beauty and of love.

That the conditions of modern life are essentially ugly may not be evident here in Copley Square in the city of Boston, although even on that point there is reasonable difference of opinion. Consider the skyline, for example, and Sargent's representation of the Christian ideal of the Deity as three gods. But whatever beauty there may be within reach of this favored spot, the want of a public sense of beauty is evident in a hundred other parts of the city—in the sky-lines and outdoor advertising,

to go no farther into painful details. All of our New England cities show that a community which will not cultivate a taste for good art will certainly have bad art. If it will not have beautiful public houses and trees and parks, statues and fountains, green grass, building laws that are obeyed, and a civic consciousness aroused, then it will have vulgar advertising, appealing to the coarsest instincts, shocking the finer feelings, degrading womanhood, and militating against every phase of social well-being which is fostered by art education.

Thus it is clear that the training for ordinary citizenship should cultivate the love of beauty in nature and art; at least the ability to distinguish between ugliness and beauty. The *highest* citizenship demands more than this; namely, the ability in an age of materialism to assign just relative values to utilitarian ugliness and non-utilitarian beauty, where there is an apparent conflict of interests. Apparent, I say, for I believe there is never, in truth, any such conflict.

Some people agree that art interests are worthy pursuits for school and college students, but hold that the proper place is outside the school and college; at least, they would not have such studies count toward graduation. Such a view is narrow. Let certain studies be given prestige in the curriculum, and all others will be neglected by the great majority of students. So far as administration can influence the matter, art studies should be placed on an absolute par with other subjects. Any other policy is inconsistent with the belief that education must develop the whole man. Any other policy aids in perpetuating the anomalous conditions in hundreds of second-rate institutions, where the ability to "make" the football team actually counts more toward graduation than proficiency in the fine arts.

A school may have its art club, with meetings after school hours, with attendance purely voluntary, and with no recognition in the school records. What is the result? Either the work is made amusing and haphazard, therefore trivial; or else it is systematic and difficult, therefore serious. But if it is trivial, it is worse than nothing, for it conforms to the false popular notion of art as a mere amusement; if it is serious, the pupils will desert it, for only a rare boy or girl will pursue any subject seriously for any length of time, unless it counts as a regular school course. The voluntary art club is therefore insufficient.

In college also it is not enough to regard art as a highly approved recreation. It is not enough to provide museums and exhibitions and voluntary lectures. Anyone who endeavors to engage any considerable number of students in any activity outside the regular courses is liable

to meet this situation; the activity must be amusing and require no regular work or attendance; or it must afford the transient charm of novelty; or it must be athletics. To secure for the fine arts in American colleges the high place and the serious study they deserve, we must provide regular courses leading to the bachelor of arts degree.

This truth was evident at Bowdoin College last year. In one of the most beautiful art buildings in the country, voluntary courses in music and in the history of art were offered by thoroughly competent professors. The art lectures were illustrated by admirable collections, and the music by the best instruments. The students professed great interest, but declared themselves so rushed with regular studies and with purely student activities that there was no time left for courses not in the curriculum. Indeed, in one of the student humorous publications appeared a map of the campus, on which the location of the art building was marked *terra incognita*.

That this concern for beauty as the noblest expression of life should not form a part of the character of American colleges is especially deplorable; for, as Professor Mills told us at the meeting yesterday, and as Professor Norton has long insisted:

Nowhere are such study and knowledge more needed than in America, for nowhere in the civilized world are the practical concerns of life more engrossing; nowhere are the conditions of life more prosaic; nowhere is the poetic spirit less evident and the love of beauty less diffused. . . . The absence of the love of beauty is an indication of the lack of the highest intellectual quality, but it is also no less an indication of the lack of the highest moral dispositions.

All this I heard Professor Norton say a few years ago, when I was an undergraduate at Harvard College. At that time, with little conception of the intimate relation of art and life, and the influence of art on public morality, I did not understand what Professor Norton meant. Since then I have seen New England cities essentially ugly wherever man has laid his hand, with no regulations looking toward municipal betterment, with no public sense of beauty; and these cities support colleges which are turning out from June to June men and women, called bachelors of *art*, who are artistically starved.

Visit a college with no art galleries and museums, with no courses in the theory and history of art, no recognition in its accredited courses of the educational value of artistic creation under efficient direction—visit such a college and look in any direction: the bad art with which students adorn their rooms and themselves, the wall papers, the color combinations in the buildings, the incongruous styles of architecture, the want of

refined pleasures for recreation hours, the narrow range of interests, the distorted ideas of beauty shown in their publications, the crudeness of social intercourse, the defacement of college property. For such conditions, the college which makes no attempt to cultivate the love of the beautiful in art is vitally responsible. It is further deplorable that the colleges which draw their students from homes and communities most destitute of the sense of beauty are the very colleges which most neglect æsthetic culture.

I have in mind a New England college where I found all the students, both men and women, required to take a course in trigonometry five hours a week, and given no opportunity even to elect a course in art. If man were nothing more than a reasoning animal; if he had no power of forming lofty ideals and feeling the inspiration to attain them; if there were not infinite possibilities of pure delight and moral elevation in a world of beautiful sights and sounds, then five-hour courses in trigonometry might suffice. Or, if we were willing that that bachelor of arts degree should signify the *partial* culture of the individual—say the development of intellectual strength, or the preparation to earn a livelihood—then we should have no serious charge against those colleges which neglect the æsthetic side of human nature. But to accept the definition of the aim of education with which we have started is to agree that courses in the *history* and *theory* of art, employing frequent critical examination of ancient and modern art, should count toward the arts degree.

Nor is this all. To make our study of art yield the highest value in understanding and appreciation, we must have actual practice in drawing and painting. The best we may demand of art study is not the result of observation alone, or of books alone, or of both; the student's own creative instinct must be summoned forth and tested. A fit analogy may be drawn from literature. It is doubtful if any person appreciates a sonnet to his utmost capacity, unless he has tried seriously to write a sonnet. Something analogous to the laboratory method of instruction is now used to advantage in every branch of education. It should be an accredited part of college education in art; but so far *only* as such method is deemed necessary by the instructor for the proper understanding and appreciation of the subject as a culture study.

A student at Harvard College who takes Fine Arts I studies not only in the lecture-room and in the library, not only in the museum, but as well in the studio. For instance, he spends hours trying to reproduce, with the brush, the beauties of form and color and chiaroscuro in a dead oak leaf; and it is not too much to say that every landscape painting, and

every walk in the fields and woods, becomes more enjoyable to that man, because college gives him the best means of discovering the beautiful in one of the least of God's creation.

The aim of these college courses should not be to train practical artists. Talent for any art is rare; a living from any art is seldom made; but everyone can cultivate a taste for art, and thus make for himself a more abundant life. "The more things thou learnest to know and to enjoy, the more complete will be for thee the delight of living."

In closing, I may add that the substitution of other studies for Greek, which has already gone far and is likely to continue, has important bearing on our question. For although colleges must be content with meager classes in Greek, and accept more and more students who are trying to get an education without Greek, yet the college *may* emphasize the *kind* of culture for which the advocates of Greek have always stood. This they can do, not by offering courses for their immediate interest or money-value, but by refusing to count toward the A. B. degree purely utilitarian courses by postponing as late as may be the period of technical training, and giving standing and dignity in the curriculum to courses in the theory and history and practice of art.

DISCUSSION

THE PRESIDENT: Dr. Huling will now open the discussion.

DR. RAY GREENE HULING, headmaster of the Cambridge English High School: Professor Foster's interesting paper, as excellent as it has been, has failed in one important particular as a means of opening a discussion. We have agreed so completely and heartily in his propositions that there really is no target for us to fire at when we begin to answer. It is my happy privilege to supply that lack, for I do not expect to win the assent of the audience to the propositions that I present until after they have gone home and thought the matter over; and I shall be very glad to be refuted publicly and completely, if that is in your mind to do today.

It seems to me that artistic and utilitarian subjects in school and in college alike should be regarded as of extremely high value, and that in college they should be allowed to count toward the degree of A.B. The line of thought which has led me to that conclusion is this:

Service is the highest duty for all men and all women—service in the world's work, not simply the ability to acquire, not simply the power to teach, though that is one form of service, but the power to make a genuine contribution to the sum of good and of value in the world. Colleges, therefore, ought to regard the generation of this power as their highest privilege, and make sure that their instruction leading to skill and judg-

ment, to excellence of character, to elevated taste, should actually issue in efficiency in the later life of the students. If it were possible that all our college graduates should be scholarly men and women, and nothing more, it would be, it seems to me, an undesirable result. Colleges would not have had their foundation or their endowment, if such were the ultimate aim expected by their founders. Service, after all, is the supreme test of the value of higher education, and of the secondary education that is not succeeded by attendance upon college.

A second principle which I should like to express is this: that the highest service that most men and women can expect to give must come to the world through the vocation in which they are occupied; not through asides, not through accidental situations, but actually through the work by which they are earning their living or to which they are devoting their strength, if earning the living is not a necessity. A scientist may now and then on some geological vacation discover a mine which shall enrich his family and those associated with them, and render them means of power for generations to come; but it is a question even then if that same scientist has not done more of value to the world through the personal touch upon the lives of his students and through awakening them to better methods of study and expression. Vocation, therefore, it seems to me, is a matter of supreme importance, and is worthy of being considered in the aims of college study. We ought to bear in mind, so far as we can get any opportunity to learn it, what is to be the ultimate calling of the boys and girls, or the young men and women, who come under our hands; for the highest hope of service of most of them, if not all, is through awakening that calling.

It follows, if you believe that service is the ultimate test of real value in education, and if you believe that service is most likely to come through the vocation for which one is prepared, that the preparation for service in vocation is important enough for school and college to give it strong and earnest consideration. To what extent the vocation should be regarded in a college course is a difficult thing to determine. I should say in the schools of the grade in which I have spent my life, schools in which the pupils are expecting not to go on to further study, but to go out into the active business of life, that about one-third of the time of each pupil for the last three years of his school course is a fair estimate of the extent to which this process should go on. It should be accompanied, I believe fully, by liberal study to a larger extent than vocational study. There should be a groundwork in the elements of academic knowledge. There should be outlooks in various directions, in art, as has been pointed out, as well as in the more purely academic subjects; but there should be, in

company with these, some studies that tend, as nearly as we can discover, in the direction of the pupil's aptitude for service in after-life.

I believe that this applies to men and to women alike, and that in the acceptance of this doctrine comes the answer to the question which was considered last evening. Men and women in academic subjects seem to require very much the same treatment, but in those matters which pertain to their future lives a difference of treatment is desirable. I believe that this difference of treatment should appear in the secondary school, and should go on into the college life. One reason for this is the fact that it is eminently desirable that this vocational study and training should be given under the atmosphere of academic culture, by the side of the studies which tend to liberalize the mind. Yet we must not make too strong a distinction between those subjects of college study that are purely utilitarian and those that are purely academic; for I have yet to find any utilitarian subject which does not train the judgment, which does not, under the right teacher, help to form character, which may not, under the right teacher, tend to stimulate and elevate taste. These three canons which Dr. Gordon gave us last night are legitimate to apply to utilitarian subjects, as well as to those which we call liberal or cultural. I think, however, that the best result is likely to be obtained when the studies that pertain to the future calling of the individual are not isolated in technical schools, which have a narrow basis, but rather when they are united at the same time with academic subjects, running concurrently for each individual. For that reason I confess that I had a feeling of regret at the time Simmons College was founded and took the form with which it began. It seemed to me a better thing for the girls of New England that the work which was rightly regarded as of importance by the founder of that institution should be taken in connection with the academic work of some New England college for women. I should have been glad to have had the whole endowment transferred to Radcliffe College, for instance, so that girls might have what they now can obtain at Radcliffe, and also at the same time, before they graduated, what they can obtain at Simmons College. This, however, I suppose under the law was not possible, and the regret was useless. But happily the same thing is coming about in a way by the introduction into such institutions as Simmons College of purely academic subjects in a considerable degree. Still, one result of this particular combination is the multiplying of colleges for women, when apparently we have in New England institutions enough, though there is still an opportunity for an increase of strength in most of those institutions.

The same I think is true in colleges for men. This is a practical age. There are some requirements made upon the young men who go out into life from college which were not made one hundred years ago. There is

in this fact, it seems to me, a reason for some changes in our institutions, especially in the matter of breadth. Some of these have already come to pass. Those relating to science will suggest themselves at once. But there is one department of life into which many of the college graduates are going which still is too poorly represented in the college curriculum. I refer to business life. The special preparation for business activities could be, it seems to me, with advantage carried higher than it is now, and could be with great advantage brought to the attention of young men at the time they are undergoing their academic culture. We can see, if we read the papers, that it might be wise for young business men to study their economics and their science of accounts at the same time they are taking lectures in ethics from Professor Palmer. The union of morality and of business has yet to be accomplished, even among college men. I should like, therefore, to see generally in such institutions as Harvard, and Brown, and Yale, and Dartmouth, what is already coming to appear in some of them, the introduction of courses that tend to make the young men successful business men; and I should be glad if most of the young men of my acquaintance who are going into business were to have one-third of their time for the last three years in these which might be called technical business subjects. I believe they would be more serviceable men when the burdens of business life fall upon their shoulders, as they will in the near future.

There remains but a single point to press. If all this should be done—if the colleges for women, for instance, should add courses in the home arts, because many of the girls, whether married or single, will have the burden of the care of home upon their shoulders in a few years—would it still be advisable that they should receive the degree of bachelor of arts through this sort of work in part? I believe that it would be. I am not in full sympathy with the division between science and arts in our institutions at present. I am inclined to think it would serve a better purpose, and stand really for more in the mind of the growing boy or girl, if A.B. instead of B.S. were given for courses which are largely scientific. The fact is that no one now takes a purely scientific course through his college career. There are arts subjects and science subjects united. That is as it ought to be, it seems to me; for both breadth of culture and readiness for emergencies in the future require it. I think it would be better on the whole, therefore, to sweep away all the distinctions that are now represented by the Ph.B., B.S., and B.A., and give one single degree, which could everywhere and always be understood to represent a scholarly man or a scholarly woman, trained not only in acquisition, not only supplied with knowledge, but also able for service in doing the world's work.